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Vocational Adjustment of the Handicapped

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WITH an ever-increasing impetus the need for the vocational adjustment of the physically handicapped is becoming recognized. This increasing recognition has been leading, on an ever-widening scale, to an analysis of the problems of this adjustment and to a development of programs to meet them. Evidence of this recognition and of the programs is fairly numerous. Our training schools for teachers of the handicapped are including special courses in the vocational guidance of the handicapped. Our state education departments are requiring training in guidance as part of the requirements for licenses. Our periodicals devoted to the handicapped appear with articles on the problems. Even the World's Fair in New York had several exhibits designed to interest the public in the economic problems of the handicapped[1].

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There is no doubt that recognition is becoming a widespread fact today. Programs are being developed stemming from this recognition. First in importance and scope is the practically nation-wide vocational rehabilitation service carried on by the states with the financial assistance and supervision of the Federal authorities. This service is available for any person with a physical disability that interferes with his vocational efficiency. It offers counseling, training, and placement by specialists in the field. The various state employment services are attempting to carry on placement for the handicapped. Sometimes legislation is secured to obtain special benefits such as stands for the blind in Federal and state buildings.

[1] The exhibits of the Institute for the Crippled and Disabled, the model home built of materials made in workshops and the exhibit of the New York Institute for the Education of the Blind.

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Prior to his present position, he served in several interesting related professions: namely, (1) as psychometrician in the New York City office of the vocational rehabilitation division of the New York State Department of Education; (2) as a teacher in the deaf-blind department of the New York Institute for the Education of the Blind; and (3) as a junior examiner for the United States Civil Service Commission, Washington, D. C.

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There are numerous private agencies in the field. Many lay organizations, originally intended to arouse public interest, are now developing new services such as vocational counseling, training, placement, and suitable referral. They work directly with the handicapped as a service agency. Among such organizations may be mentioned the Institute for Crippled and Disabled, the Hadley Correspondence School for the Blind, the Rutland Training Center, various leagues for the hard of hearing, various associations for tuberculosis. There are also a large number of workshops which serve special groups of handicapped.

There can be no doubt that these programs of vocational adjustment are permanent. They are practical because they enable the handicapped to work and support themselves. They are socially beneficial because they fill a definite role in our democracy enabling our handicapped to realize their fullest possibilities and to become contributing members of the social group.

Many of these vocational programs have developed independently of each other. Several overemphasize one or another aspect of the adjustment. Some are founded on the premise that the handicapped should be able to find their own positions once their vocational training has been completed. Others put the emphasis on placement. Still others offer only positions in workshops. Others act as guidance agencies referring handicapped to appropriate sources of assistance. While it cannot be expected that every program be thorough, an awareness of the meaning of vocational guidance in its application to the handicapped is needed. Too often the plea has been made for vocational guidance without full realization of what it entails. This paper is an attempt to outline a complete program of vocational guidance.

VOCATIONAL GUIDANCE

Vocational guidance is best defined as a process of assisting an individual to select an occupation, prepare for it, enter upon it, and progress in it. In this definition there are several phrases of importance. First, vocational guidance is a process. As such it is long sustained. It is a service afforded an individual through many years of his life. Second, it is assistance. It is a service afforded people to help them develop their capacities to their fullest extent. Third, it is a service to help select an occupation. It does not force an individual to choose a particular occupation. Rather it shows the individual his vocational assets and liabilities. It shows him how to base a choice of an occupation on this analysis and upon the possibilities in the occupational world. Fourth, vocational guidance assists an individual to prepare for a job by giving him the available information about training facilities. Fifth, vocational guidance assists him in getting a job once training has been completed. And finally, vocational guidance attempts to ease the frictions that occur on a job, by helping the individual adjust to the job demands.

Vocational guidance of the handicapped is defined in the same way. When any program of guidance is put into practice there are several functions that must be performed. Basic to all sound guidance is occupational analysis. The most important jobs in the professions, commerce, service, and mechanics should be analyzed. The requirements, the training facilities, the duties, the conditions of work, the remuneration, and the avenues of advancement should be studied. These

analyses should be supplemented with details on the physical disabilities feasible or not feasible on the job in order that the guidance of the handicapped may become less a guess and more a fact. The defect analysis should extend from a study of the defect in relation to training, to the duties, to the first job, and on to the jobs in promotion. The entire sweep of a possible vocational career should be analyzed in relation to a defect.

A second function, applying only to the handicapped, is the determination of feasibility. The work capacity or tolerance of the handicapped individual must be established. This involves a careful study of the limitations in strenuous and sustained activities, in mobility, in appearance, and in the prognosis of the defect. Upon this is determined the type of vocational adjustment that is to be followed[2].

The remaining functions follow. Close upon the determination of feasibility is counseling, then training supervision, placement, and follow-up. Counseling is the imparting of vocational information; training supervision is the careful check on training progress to insure full utilization of the training facilities; placement is the obtaining of a job wherein the training is best utilized; follow-up is job supervision to ease the difficulties that often crop up. These functions implement vocational guidance with a definite program.

[2] The following are the types of vocational adjustment possible to a handicapped person: (a) a position in the normal competitive world of work; (b) a concession such as a stand for the blind, a part-time job for tuberculous or a regular job in a sheltered environment; (c) a job in a workshop; and (e) the establishment of a home industry such as weaving for a deaf-blind person, basket-making for a case of total paralysis of the lower limbs.

There is no one solution to the vocational problems of the handicapped. Regardless of the area the range of the abilities and potentialities of the individuals in it is as wide as that of physically normal individuals. The differences between the normal and the handicapped are mostly a matter of degree, seldom a matter of kind.

Occupational Analysis. Basic to a vocational guidance program is occupational analysis. This term, as used in this paper, has two meanings. It means a study of a given job or job series to present in an orderly fashion the requirements, the conditions of work, the duties, the remuneration, the possibilities for advancement and transfer. The defects that render a person unsuitable to the job, or suitable only under certain conditions, are included in this job study. Occupational analysis also means the determination of employment trends. And fundamental to both is the constant restudy to keep the information up to date. Occupational analysis, either in its narrow sense of job analysis or in the broader view of occupational changes, is basic to effective counseling, training, and placement.

The application of a job-analysis program to the handicapped has not been either extensively or systematically carried out. Specific investigations, designed to study the possibilities for the handicapped, have been few in number.

The earliest and most primitive job analysis for the handicapped is the list. There are lists available (and used) today giving job suggestions for the blind (i. e., piano tuner, chair caner, basket weaver), for the deaf (i. e., printing), for crippled (i. e., watch repairing, lens grinding), and so forth. Lists have both advantages and disadvantages. They are, first of all,

morale building. They show that handicapped can work, and can work at many jobs. They impress the layman with the fact that the handicapped can work. And finally, when used by informed workers, they are suggestive of job possibilities. On the other hand, lists are disadvantageous because they limit the range of jobs considered feasible for the handicapped. Job possibilities become stereotyped when lists are employed. While lists may simplify counseling to a mere consultation of the appropriate list, it complicates placement and job success. Success on a job is made up of more than the absence of an interfering defect. Psychological abilities and disabilities and economic conditions are both ignored.

The modern job analysis holds much of benefit to the handicapped. Difficulty analysis reveals the chief problems on the job; duty analysis the functions performed by the worker; time and motion studies economical methods of handling the job. Not only will job analysis aid in the satisfactory placement of individuals with permanent defects but also assist materially in the placement of individuals with aggravatable defects such as the partially sighted, the hard of hearing, the tuberculous, and the cardiac. Job analysis not only indicates the placement possibilities for the handicapped but also broadens the field of vocational opportunity for the handicapped.

Job analysis can be of assistance in the occupational adjustment of the handicapped in other ways. Jobs at which handicapped have failed should be investigated to discover whether the defect or other factors caused the failure. Study should be made also of jobs at which the handicapped are successful to discover the part played by the defect. There are jobs at which a defect may be an asset. As an example it was found that in assembling certain intricate parts of the Talking Book blind workers were more competent than the sighted. These possibilities for job analysis should not be overlooked.

Feasibility. The determination of limitations of a defect is a basic step in the vocational adjustment of the handicapped. Upon this depends the vocational program. If the disability is so handicapping that the everyday job in the world of work is not suitable, then some form of special employment is necessary. This may be a position with special concessions such as part-time employment, employment at subminimum wages, a vending stand. Or it may be a job in a sheltered workshop or the development of a home industry.

While feasibility is principally concerned with the limitations caused by a defect many more factors enter into its determination. Personality, that vague but highly significant quality, must be considered. Intelligence, special aptitudes, and trainability enter also in the determination. Economic conditions and possibilities in the locality in which the handicapped person is to live are another group of factors. All these factors focalizing onto one individual must be analyzed. Feasibility must look forward to the eventual job and backwards upon the forces that have made the individual.

There are certain characteristics that increase the chances for employment in competitive jobs although they do not guarantee it. If a blind person can travel without assistance or if he has travel vision, then he is considered more employable than those that need a guide. If a deaf person can read lips or speak, his chances are increased. A cardiac should be classed as a IIa, i. e.,

able to carry on life's activities with slightly diminished physical exertion. A tuberculous should be able to work for seven or eight hours a day and the lesion should have been arrested for six months or more. The crippled should be able to use the common conveyances for travel. If consideration of these limitations of defects indicates that a position in the normal competitive world of work is not advisable, then some form of sheltered employment is necessary. Such employment, as it was pointed out in the preceding, varies from the relatively independent vending stands to the highly sheltered home industries.

The entire process of determining feasibility is subjective. No criteria can be given that will relieve the supervisor of rehabilitation or guidance, of the need for personal evaluation. He must carry through this evaluation upon the bases of his experience, the case record, interviews, and tryouts. He must be ready to change his decision later if the handicapped person shows some capacity to make the adjustment alone. He must step in at this time and give his wholehearted assistance. Personal initiative should be encouraged.

Counseling. Counseling is the process of imparting vocational information. It is the period of occupational orientation. On the part of the counselor it is a process of coming to know the limitations, the abilities, and the resources of the handicapped person; and on the part of the counselee, it is a growing awareness of his place in the occupational world.

Counseling for the physically normal can be both group and individual. For the handicapped it should be personal. The vocational adjustment of the handicapped is a delicate and precarious process at best. Group work is too generalized, and the handicapped are, after all, not a group or class but individuals. There are so many traits and characteristics about them apart from their defects that personal service is required.

Before the period of personal counseling, or coincident with its beginning, there should be an extensive preparation. This preparation can be obtained by an *occupations* course and prevocational training. A course in occupations with adaptation for the handicapped should include the following: the nature of work and the fields of work, the requirements of the various fields, the methods of obtaining information about particular jobs, the limitations of handicaps and the attitudes of the public toward the handicapped, stories of successful handicapped (not the famous handicapped but the everyday John, Jack, and Mary), agencies serving the handicapped in the locality, and all special information to fit individual needs. Such a course should develop objective thinking about a job, techniques to use in job selection, and morale. Too often the handicapped leave school with no knowledge of the requirements of the occupational world and with an unhealthful morale. An adequate preparation would assist materially in preventing this.

Prevocational training is also necessary. This does not mean specialized courses in vocational work such as blueprint reading, mechanics, diamond cutting, or medical stenography. It means a general training for all in shop practice, office routine, and the manual arts. The content of these courses should be selected so that the greatest possible number of work elements are included in the course of study. For

factoriness of the placement from the employer's and the employee's viewpoints is the standard by which the guidance program can be measured. If the employer has a competent worker and if the employee has a job that satisfies him and that will not aggravate his condition then a good guidance program has been carried through.

In any placement program for the handicapped there are certain recurrent objections to the employment of disabled. They appear to have become standardized. There is a group of economic objections. The disabled, it is maintained, are poor producers; they are inefficient; they are slow. Another version of the economic objection is the limited versatility of the handicapped person. It is claimed that they do not fit into promotional schemes nor into seasonal shifts on jobs because they cannot handle every job in the series. Their versatility is limited because of their defect. Another type of economic objection to the handicapped is the accident risk involved in their employment. The disabled are held to be liable to injure themselves and others. In cases of emergencies, such as fires, the disabled are a danger to others. This belief is reflected also in the fear that accident insurance rates will be increased upon the employment of handicapped. It is also feared that the group insurance rates will be increased. Another variation of the economic objection is the fear that the employer must compensate for the combined effects of an accident in his establishment and the pre-existing disability.

Another group of objections can be called the psychological. In the first place the public dislikes contact with a disabled person. The employer feels that he will become over-solicitous about the disabled person and show him special considerations or that the worker will request special considerations or privileges from him. This, he feels, may lower the work morale in the shop.

There are other barriers in the way of placement for the handicapped, which are a part of the procedures of hiring that are becoming more prominent every day. The medical examination is often a barrier, and the standardized procedures of employment offices often militate against the placement of handicapped .

How can these objections be overcome? The psychological objections can be overcome by a program of propaganda and demonstration. The economic objections can be overcome by more *rational* arguments since they are (supposedly) rational objections. Such things as studies of the work efficiency of the disabled on the job is one method. Analyses of labor laws to obtain the true picture on compensation for second injuries and industrial insurance is another method.

Definite attempts to place the handicapped have proceeded from the sporadic efforts of social workers, through the development of lay or private employment agencies to the assumption of the task of placement by the various state employment services under the Wagner-Peyser Act. In such states as Illinois, New York, Pennsylvania, and elsewhere there are special departments for the handicapped. These serve all types of disabled.

Placement of the disabled is made difficult by the objections of employers and by legal or work-condition barriers. Placement can be made simpler by demonstration of the economic worth of the handicapped to employers and by public education. The future should

(*Continued on page 245*)

tem of guidance for all hearing children is extended to the hearing handicapped as well. Records indicating the organic growth from level to level are studied periodically, conferences are called, and new plans and recommendations put in order.

5. Individual tutoring. Individual tutoring in those subjects that require the greatest language development is offered a few of the more severely handicapped children. This work is carried on in collaboration with grade and special teachers. In every case where considered feasible the parents are brought into the picture. Returns from this type of instruction amply justified the time, energy, and cost devoted to it.

6. Speech training. For New Rochelle, speech and voice training assumes a position of paramount importance. Among the great developments that have humanized man, sharpened his mental acuity, and made possible modern civilization, speech is fundamental. Speech emancipated and lifted man to the dignity of a creator. In a similar fashion the average child achieves liberation through speech. Research tends to indicate that speech, and emotional and intellectual growth occur side by side, inextricably interwoven.

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Vocational Adjustment

(Continued from page 226)

have greater results in placement as the various state employment services develop their resources.

Follow-Up. Follow-up is essentially an adjustment of work to the worker and the worker to his work. The chief problems of follow-up are adjustment of wage and hour disputes, correction of unsatisfactory work conditions and disputes with fellow employees, and the need for additional adjustments to ameliorate the interference of the defect with work efficiency.

From the viewpoint of the individual that has been placed, follow-up is essentially an effort made to achieve greater effectiveness for him on the job. From the viewpoint of the employer, follow-up is polishing off the rough edges to secure a smoothly working cog in his business. From the point of view of a vocational adjustment service for handicapped, it is an evaluation of the effectiveness of counseling, training, placement, and occupational analysis. Standards can be established through follow-up against which each of the interested individuals may evaluate himself.

CONCLUSIONS

A very important part of the program of vocational adjustment of the handicapped is the constant enlargement of vocational opportunities for them. Occupational analyses are one method whereby such enlargement may develop. Another is the lessening of legal restrictions or barriers. The development of workshops, and markets for the products of workshops, is another significant problem. Still another is the widening of civil service regulations to ease the admittance of competent handicapped into state service. These problems require time and research for their solution.

The establishment of a program of vocational guidance as outlined on the preceding pages, adequate placement of trained handicapped, elimination of artificial barriers will enable the handicapped to become contributing members of our society.

NEWS AND COMMENTS

Home Instruction in New York City

IN the City of New York, there is a very interesting and unusual school. It is known as the *School Without a School House.*

The children enrolled upon the register are homebound and physically unable to attend school with other children. Therefore, the Board of Education, in its wisdom, sends the school to these children through the assignment of home teachers who are under the supervision of Dr. Adela J. Smith, assistant director of the Division of Physically Handicapped Children.

On each of their school days, 1,712 homebound physically handicapped children, in 1,712 homes, pledge allegiance to the flag of the United States of America, and the school day starts for them. Some of the children are propped up in bed, some in wheeled chairs, while others are able to be seated at a desk or table.

The same school program and instruction in the same subjects are provided for them that other children are receiving in classes in school. Promotions are made as the children finish the work of each grade, and their monthly progress is compared with that of the children in a nearby school of affiliation.

Regardless of physical handicaps and other difficulties, with ready smiles and determination to succeed, these exceptional children have passed, many with honors, the same examinations, Regents' tests, and qualifications of the principals and assistant superintendents, as the children in regular classes.

Home instruction for homebound physically handicapped children was originated by Dr. Smith as an experimental study in 1913 through the Division of Physically Handicapped Children with 125 volunteer teachers. When the infantile paralysis epidemics of 1916-1917 left, as an aftermath, 270 helpless crippled children who a few weeks before were normal, healthy, happy children, the associate superintendent in charge of special education of the handicapped decided that these pupils should not be denied the privilege of school instruction. The Board of Superintendents recommended that the experimental study of home instruction should become part of the organized schooling for homebound crippled children. In February 1919 this resolution was approved by the Board of Education and 25 home teachers were appointed.

Home Instruction has now been adopted by school boards in many states of this country for the special education of the handicapped children. There are now 214 home teachers for homebound physically handicapped children in New York City.

The advent of the home teacher makes this group the happiest of the handicapped children. She has become the sunshine of their shut-in lives. She changes the spirit of the entire day and carries a message of cheer and democratic schooling. She has changed dull, listless, unhappy, discouraged children to bright, happy, busy little folks with smiling faces and a new interest in life

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